

Agenda – Equality and Social Justice Committee

Meeting Venue:

For further information contact:

Virtual meeting

Gemma Gifford and Rhys Morgan

Meeting date: 10 June 2024

Committee Clerk

Meeting time: 14.00

0300 200 6565

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

Pre-meeting registration: 13:45–14:00

1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(14:00)

2 Papers to note

(14:00)

3.1 Correspondence between the Chair and the Finance Committee regarding scrutiny of the draft budget

(Pages 1 – 5)

3.2 Correspondence between the Chair and the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice regarding the summit on Speech, Language and Communication held on January 24 2024

(Pages 6 – 8)

3.3 Correspondence between the Chair and the Independent Press Standards Organisation regarding Anti-racist Wales and the use of racially pejorative language

(Pages 9 – 10)

3.4 Correspondence from the Building Communities Trust to the Chair regarding responses to the cost of living crisis

(Page 11)

3.5 Minutes from the meeting between the Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning and the South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority



Commissioners and data diversity statistics from South Wales Fire and Rescue Authority

(Pages 12 – 24)

4 Motion under SO17.42 (vi) to exclude the public from the remainder of today's meeting

(14:00)

5 Childcare follow up inquiry: consideration of key issues

(14:00–15:00)

(Pages 25 – 43)

6 Forward work planning

(15:00–15:30)

(Pages 44 – 56)

Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

3 June 2024

Dear Peredur,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2024-25: Evidence provided by the Welsh Government

Thank you for inviting us to share views on the Draft Budget process.

On a practical level, whilst we were grateful to the Welsh Government for providing its written evidence in a timely fashion, our main concerns regarding its contents are set out in our [report](#), published in February 2024. The Committee appreciates the timing of the Draft Budget was due to the delay of the UK Budget, but fundamentally there is not enough time for effective scrutiny by Senedd Committees.

It is our view that the impact on equality, social justice and the well-being of future generations need to be taken into account much more rigorously by Ministers when making budget decisions. Every year the Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) has failed to offer the detail we believe necessary to justify the Welsh Government's spending decisions.

Improvements

The Committee would like to see several improvements including:

- More clarity and transparency regarding the methodologies used in determining allocations and the reasons behind spending decisions;
- Better use of data including providing rigorous analysis of the impact of spending decisions particularly in respect of different demographic groups;
- Providing summary of feedback and recommendations from stakeholders and advisory groups. This would show how views have already been incorporated into the assessment process, and if not, why this has not been possible; and
- Providing a clear plan for evaluation and monitoring of the impacts over time.

Consideration given to budgetary matters throughout the year

In June, the Committee will be undertaking general scrutiny of the Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice, and intends to reflect on recommendations made in previous inquiries including Draft Budget recommendations. The Committee is also considering writing to Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers following the cabinet reshuffle, asking them how their priorities are intended to contribute to the Welsh Government's commitments on equality and social justice in their respective portfolios. Current scrutiny arrangements mean that the strategic focus on equality and social justice across the Governmental departments is often lost, and we hope having a clearer overview of the priorities within each portfolio will assist us in our scrutiny of the Draft Budget 2025-26.

We hope our reflections are useful to your Committee as it conducts its work on this key area.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jenny Rathbone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'J'.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Chair, Children, Young People, and Education Committee

Chair, Climate Change, Environment, and Infrastructure Committee

Chair, Culture, Communications, Welsh Language, Sport, and International

Relations Committee

Chair, Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee

Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

Chair, Legislation, Justice and Constitution Committee

Chair, Local Government and Housing Committee

22 March 2024

Dear Committee Chairs,

Scrutiny of the Draft Budget

You will recall that I wrote last year inviting Committees to express views on improvements that the Welsh Government could make to the documents it produces alongside its Draft Budget and in ministerial written evidence provided to Committees.

Your responses were considered by the Committee on 21 June 2023 and I subsequently wrote to the Minister for Finance and Local Government (the Minister) on 23 June 2023 asking for the concerns raised to be taken into account ahead of the 2024-25 budget round. These related to:

- the late publication of the Draft Budget leading to truncated scrutiny;
- a lack of transparency regarding the impact that the Draft Budget has on policy areas within each Committee's remit;
- the poor quality of written evidence provided by the Welsh Government; and
- the Welsh Government not providing responses to certain Committee recommendations ahead of the Final Budget debate.

These issues were raised again during the consideration of the Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024-25 earlier this year. Our report made the following recommendations and conclusions building on the views previously expressed:

***Conclusion 2.** The Committee will consult Senedd Committees involved in budget scrutiny ahead of the 2025-26 budget round to gain a better understanding of the evidence provided by the Welsh Government in support of the Draft Budget, and to explore ways to maximise budgetary scrutiny throughout the year*

***Recommendation 1.** The Committee recommends that the Minister publishes ministerial evidence papers at the same time as the Draft Budget in order to provide clarity on the criteria and priorities behind ministerial decisions, with the aim of enabling stakeholders to engage in the scrutiny process more effectively and at an earlier stage.*

***Recommendation 2.** The Committee recommends that, if the Draft Budget is delayed again in future years:*

- *the Minister and officials continue to attend a pre-scrutiny session with the Finance Committee; and*
- *the Minister works with the Finance Committee to identify approaches that can enhance scrutiny opportunities, including providing documentation relating to the Draft Budget, at an earlier stage.*

These recommendations were accepted in principle, with the Minister highlighting the practical difficulties in responding to the quantity of information requested by individual committees, at the same time as the publication of the Draft Budget.

We therefore ask you to consider the following issues, and to provide a response by Friday 24 May 2024.

- What improvements, if any, have you seen in the documentation provided by the Welsh Government alongside the Draft Budget 2024-25?
- Have you identified any further improvement that could be made to the information provided alongside the Draft Budget?
- Given the short time available for scrutiny, what consideration, if any, have you given to scrutinising budgetary matters within your remit at an earlier stage, for example considering longer terms strategic planning, following up on previous scrutiny recommendations or pre-scrutiny of decision making processes before the Draft Budget is published?

- The Committee is also currently working with the Minister and other stakeholders to review the Budget Process Protocol to ensure that the Senedd's budgetary processes reflect custom and practice developed in the Sixth Senedd to date. Do you have any views regarding the Senedd's budget procedures more widely?

We are grateful to you for your ongoing engagement with us on these matters and welcome any further correspondence responding to the points above.

Our aim is to raise these issues on behalf of Committees with the Minister in advance of the Plenary debate on budget priorities for 2025-26 that will take place before summer recess.

Yours sincerely,



Peredur Owen Griffiths MS
Chair, Finance Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

Agenda Item 3.2

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder
Cymdeithasol
Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Jenny Rathbone MS
Chair,
Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament

SeneddEquality@senedd.wales

30th May 2024

Dear Jenny,

Thank you for your letter of 18 March to Jane Hutt MS, the then Minister for Social Justice seeking confirmation of timescales to take actions forward from the Summit on Speech, Language and Communication (SCL) held January 24, 2024. I apologise for the delay in the response to your letter.

Since the summit on SLC in the youth justice system, officials have considered the position further with Ministers, including with the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care who holds responsibility for Speech Language and Communication provision.

We recognise the potential benefits to young people of embedding Speech Language and Communication support across Youth Justice Services teams in Wales. However, as highlighted in our initial response to the Committee's report, there are only around 800 registered Speech and Language Therapists (SLTs) in Wales and insufficient NHS employed SLTs to embed them across Youth Justice Services teams in Wales. The current financial challenges would make it very difficult to recruit, train and employ additional SLTs in this way.

It is for Local Health Boards (LHBs) to determine their health needs and how best to meet them with the resources available, including for children in contact with the justice system or those at risk of coming into contact with it. Welsh Ministers therefore encourage local Youth Justice Services teams to discuss with their respective LHBs the level of demand for speech and language support in their areas and how they can best be met.

The summit also highlighted resources Youth Justice Services teams can use to improve their Speech Language and Communication provision without requiring full SLT provision, including the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists' 'The Box' training and resources which are designed to give professionals in the justice system the ability to

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Lesley.Griffiths@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Lesley.Griffiths@gov.wales

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

identify communication issues and the skills to work successfully with individuals who have such issues. We encourage teams to make full use of these resources to support their work and meet the needs of the children they work with. The 'The Box' resources could also help to establish the level of demand for SLTs within the youth justice system and support more considered work in this area in the longer term.

I appreciate this is a challenging position but it reflects the realities of the current resourcing position on SLTs and the pragmatic need to make full use of the levers and resources at our current disposal. I am pleased the summit brought professionals together across sectors to discuss the issue and to highlight the resources available to Youth Justice Services teams

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lesley Griffiths". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

Lesley Griffiths AS/MS

Ysgrifennydd y Cabinet dros Ddiwylliant a Chyfiawnder Cymdeithasol

Cabinet Secretary for Culture and Social Justice

Jane Hutt, MS
Minister for Social Justice and Chief Whip

18 March 2024

Dear Jane,

Youth Justice Summit – Speech Language and Communication Needs

I thank you for your response received on 29 February to my letter dated 9 February.

You refer to action points that arose from the Summit and that officials were working a planned way forward before preparing advice for Ministers. So I am writing to ask if you could confirm the anticipated timescales for this work and an indication of a date by which the Committee might expect to receive news of ministerial action?

We are grateful to you, as ever, for your continued cooperation and I look forward to hearing from you in due course.

Yours sincerely,



Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair, Equality and Social Justice Committee
Welsh Parliament

Agenda Item 3.3

Sent via email on 6 June 2024

Dear Ms Rathbone,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 2024 in which you asked about IPSO's role in ensuring that the Press is playing its part in tackling racism and discrimination and how IPSO handles matters of discrimination and racism.

IPSO first and foremost upholds press standards by enforcing the Editors' Code. Part of that Code, as noted in your letter, relates to discrimination, including discrimination based on race and colour, as well as other protected characteristics. Regulated publications are aware of the Code, and the sanctions required by IPSO should the Code be broken.

Looking beyond individual complaints, IPSO has a dedicated Standards Team whose purpose is to raise press standards including through training, guidance, and interventions where we identify patterns of concern. Last year, IPSO conducted in-person training sessions with 80 journalists and journalism students. While we will always shape individual modules to the circumstances, training around Clause 12 is a standard part of our programme; three weeks ago we held an in-person training session in Manchester for a group of journalism trainees exclusively devoted to this issue.

To improve transparency and accountability around these issues, IPSO specifically monitors complaints made under Clause 12, and publishes information on a quarterly basis about instances in which articles receive more than ten complaints under Clause 12. IPSO also produces guidance for journalists and publishers who are looking for resources on specific issues. These are grouped by theme, and several touch upon discrimination. You can find this information on IPSO's website here:

<https://www.ipso.co.uk/resources-and-guidance/>.

All the best,
Alice Gould

Alice Gould
Head of Complaints

Independent Press Standards Organisation

 www.ipso.co.uk  @ipsonews



The IPSO Mark is displayed by all IPSO - regulated publishers to demonstrate their accountability to independent regulation and commitment to professional standards.

Lord Faulks

Chair of the Complaints Committee at the
Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO)

20 May 2024

Dear Lord Faulks,

Anti-racist Wales and the use of racially pejorative language

The Foreword to the Equality and Social Justice Committee's report which looked at the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan sets out:

*"the aim of becoming an anti-racist nation by 2030...requires us to be active, not passive.
To resist, rather than resign ourselves to racial discrimination."*¹

As a cross-party Committee we have supported the Welsh Government's overall aim while noting that the "institutional, political and cultural change required (to build an anti-racist Wales) will need to involve all of society".

On 11 May the Mail Online published an article on the 25th anniversary of devolution.

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-13407979/The-great-devolution-disaster-Grotesque-levels-corruption-Pygmy-politicians-obsession-woke-dogma-upsurge-nationalism-supposed-tame.html> .²

We have no quarrel with the criticism of Welsh Government performance; that is what the 3rd estate is supposed to do to keep people in power on their toes. We do however take issue with the term "Pygmy politicians" alongside a photograph of our First Minister who is the first black leader of a national government in Europe. The term is widely considered to be offensive, and within the context of the article, highly likely to be interpreted as a racially pejorative remark.

Please will you consider whether the Editor's Code of Practice that the press "must avoid prejudicial or pejorative" references to race and colour has been breached. That is certainly the conclusion that we have

¹ Actions Not Words: Towards an Anti-racist Wales by 2030

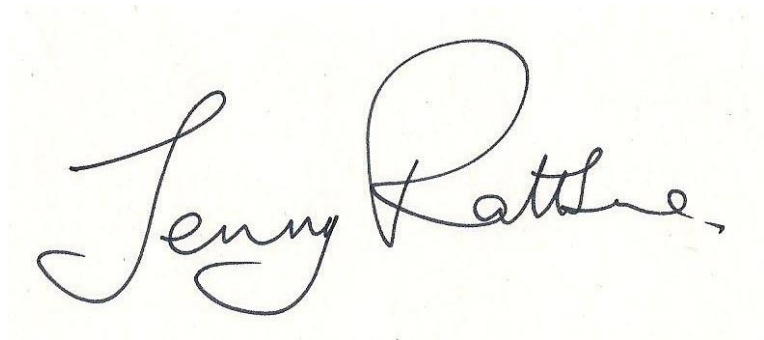
² An electronic link to the original article is provided in the cover email

made. Please advise what action IPSO may take in the hope of avoiding a repetition of what we consider to be an offensive, racially prejudiced remark.

Separately we would welcome your views on how you are ensuring that the Press more generally is playing its part in tackling racism and discrimination in the sector and in society given your influential role in upholding values and standards in the sector.

I look forward to your response in due course.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background. The signature reads "Jenny Rathbone" in a cursive, flowing script. The first name "Jenny" is written in a larger, more prominent hand, while "Rathbone" is written in a smaller, more compact hand.

Jenny Rathbone MS

Chair of the Equality and Social Justice Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.

24 May 2024.

Dear Jenny Rathbone MS, Chair of Equality and Social Justice Committee,

Re: Beyond Essentials: Community Responses to the Cost-of-Living Crisis.

I am writing to you on behalf of Building Communities Trust, who published brand-new research examining the ways in which community groups and organisations have responded to the Cost-of-Living Crisis, earlier this week.

The research, also attached alongside this letter, specifically examines the impacts of the crisis on community groups and organisations, as well as on the staff and volunteers who work for them. To date, this is one aspect of the Cost-of-Living Crisis which has not been comprehensively analysed. In doing so, the research highlights the types of support community organisations feel they need to continue doing their vital work, in addition to the challenges they face. The research shows starkly how that work really has become essential for many people – not only in terms of providing the essentials of life – such as food and fuel – but also increasingly stepping into shoes once worn by public sector organisations.

The research amplifies the experiences and needs of community groups and organisations undertaking much of this vital work. The lived experiences of people working or volunteering for community groups and organisations have shaped the report's findings and recommendations.

We believe this research will be of interest to the broader work of the Committee. Should you want any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me on eleri.williams@bct.wales.

Yours sincerely,

Eleri Williams
Policy and Research Advisor, Building Communities Trust.

Britannia House, Van Road, Caerphilly CF83 3GG
Britannia House, Van Road, Caerffili CF83 3GG
029 2120 2280 • info@bct.wales • www.bct.wales

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Mae'r Ymddiriedolwr Adeiladu Cymunedau Cyf yn gwmni elusennol cyfyngedig drwy warant.
Rhif cwmni 8916805. A gofrestrwyd yn Lloegr a Chymru.
Rhif elusen: 1164509. Ymddiriedolaeth Buddsoddi Lleol Rhif Elusen: 1164515.

Agenda Item 3.5

CABINET SECRETARY FOR HOUSING, LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PLANNING MEETING WITH SOUTH WALES FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY COMMISSIONERS – 25 APRIL 2024

Present

Julie James, MS – Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning
Vijith Randeniya – South Wales FRA Commissioner
Kirsty Williams - South Wales FRA Commissioner
Carl Foulkes - South Wales FRA Commissioner
Baroness Debbie Wilcox - South Wales FRA Commissioner
Karin Phillips - Deputy Director, Community Safety Division
Dan Stephens - Chief Fire and Rescue Adviser
Steve Pomeroy - Head of Fire Services Branch
Kerry Citric – Fire Services Branch
Steph Wood – Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning
William Parry – Assistant Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Housing, Local Government and Planning

1. The Cabinet Secretary thanked the Commissioners for taking on the role of implementing change in South Wales Fire and Rescue Service (SWFRS). The Cabinet Secretary indicated that she wanted to have an early discussion about the following matters :

- Their experience so far
- Their early thoughts on an exit strategy
- The need for diversity in the decision-making process.

The Commissioners Experience in SWFRA

2. The Commissioners provided the following observations on the intervention to date :-

- Their initial assessment of the position of the service supported the Welsh Government's decision to intervene.
- The breadth of the challenge was greater than they had anticipated.
- They had mapped action against their terms of reference and put in place the structures to deliver the required programme of work. A Director of Transformation had been appointed and the advertisement of the appointment of a permanent Chief Executive/Chief Fire Officer was imminent.
- They had identified some talent in the Service as well as opportunities for new ideas and ways of working.
- They believed that one of their key early challenges was to create the conditions necessary for change by building trust and effectively

communicating and involving staff in developments (such as the recruitment processes for senior appointments).

- Engagement with all stakeholders, including Unions was also key.

Exit Strategy

3. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that she had spoken to the Leaders of two, and the Chief Executive of one, of the ten SWFRA constituent Local Authorities and that she would hold further discussions with all of the Local Authorities about FRA governance arrangements. The Cabinet Secretary pointed out that it was important that the South Wales constituent Local Authorities knew and understood the Commissioners' role and terms of reference, the actions that were being undertaken in SWFRA and the emerging role for LAs as part of the intervention exit strategy.

4. The Cabinet Secretary explained that future governance arrangements for FRAs would be informed by Commissioners' feedback, the views of Local Authorities and the WLGA; the size of the FRA, and the selection of members, including the potential for Welsh Government direct appointments, were all issues to be considered. The Cabinet Secretary indicated the importance of taking into account the experience of governance arrangements elsewhere and referenced the National Parks. The Cabinet Secretary indicated she planned to have discussions with the Independent Remuneration Panel for Wales in due course.

5. The Commissioners indicated that they had already met with WLGA members Cllr Lis Burnett and Cllr Jane Gebbie, and the Commissioners and the Interim CFO were also going to undertake a programme of engagement with the Leaders and Chief Executives of all of the constituent Local Authorities.

6. The Commissioners explained they were not yet in a position to provide a firm timeframe, but their initial view was that there could be an exit from the intervention when it was clear management structures and the culture of the organisation had improved to the point that the FRS was able to support its own programme of improvement and that future governance arrangements had been agreed. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed she would give further consideration to the exit strategy and broader issues of FRA governance and officials would discuss parameters with the Commissioners in more detail.

7. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that she would invite Commissioners to one of her future meetings with Local Authorities for further discussions.

Diversity in Decision Making

8. The Cabinet Secretary referred to her concerns about the lack of diversity in strategic decision-making processes which was not unique to SWFRA, and this encompassed elected members as well as senior managers. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that it was important to focus on improving representation at a senior level. The Commissioners acknowledged that there was a lack of diversity in the FRS generally.

9. It was noted that the Welsh Government planned to resume collecting equality and diversity data from the FRAs. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that she would like to see data that was more extensive than standard grouping of staff in post, for instance data on new external appointments/recruits.

10. The Commissioners indicated they would share the equality and diversity data that they had collated with the Cabinet Secretary.

Future Engagement

11. The Cabinet Secretary indicated that she would keep abreast of the progress that the Commissioners were making and also keep them updated on broader discussions that she was having with wider stakeholders, including local government. The Cabinet Secretary confirmed a structure for that engagement would be put in place which would include her chairing some of the monthly Intervention Board meetings.

SWFRS Diversity Data

31 March 2024



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
De Cymru

South Wales
Fire and Rescue Service

Introduction

SWFRS Diversity Data 31/03/24

- Report includes staff who worked for the Service on 31st March 2024
- Counts include staff who work in either Wholetime, On-Call, Control, Auxiliaries, Corporate Staff (including Apprentices and staff with Yff contracts)
- Counts do not include Members, Agency, Secondments into the Service or Volunteers



Gender, Age & Disability

Table 1 - Gender

Pack Page 18

Sex	Total
Female	299
Male	1356

Table 2 – Age

Age Range	Total
Under 18	<5
18 to 24	151
25 to 34	401
35 to 44	480
45 to 54	454
55 to 64	153
65 to 74	13
Over 75	<5
Total	1,655

Table 3 – Disability

Disability	Total
Yes	9
No	796
Prefer not to say	7
Not answered	843



Ethnicity and Religion

Table 4 - Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total
Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British	0
Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African	<5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	<5
Other ethnic group	16
White	922
Prefer not to say	28
Not answered	683

Pack Page 19

Table 5 – Religion

Religion	Total
Buddhist	<5
Christian	173
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	0
Sikh	28
No religion	160
Other religion	22
Prefer not to say	559
Not answered	737



Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Table 6 – Gender identity

Gender Identity	Total
Different from birth	<5
Same as birth	977
Prefer not to say	<5
Not answered	673

Table 7 – Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	Total
Bisexual	<5
Gay or Lesbian	9
Heterosexual	475
Other sexual orientation	0
Prefer not to say	485
Not answered	685



SWFRS Diversity Data

31 March 2023



Gwasanaeth Tân ac Achub
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- Counts do not include Members, Agency, Secondments into the Service or Volunteers



Gender, Age & Disability

Table 1 - Gender

Sex	Total
Female	284
Male	1343

Table 2 – Age

Age Range	Total
18 to 24	99
25 to 34	380
35 to 44	480
45 to 54	471
55 to 64	178
65 to 74	17
Over 75	<5
Total	1,627

Table 3 – Disability

Disability	Total
Yes	9
No	877
Prefer not to say	8
Not answered	733



Ethnicity and Religion

Table 4 - Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Total
Asian, Asian Welsh or Asian British	0
Black, Black Welsh, Black British, Caribbean or African	<5
Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups	<5
Other ethnic group	16
White	995
Prefer not to say	28
Not answered	582

Table 5 – Religion

Religion	Total
Buddhist	<5
Christian	182
Hindu	0
Jewish	0
Muslim	<5
Sikh	0
No religion	167
Other religion	25
Prefer not to say	618
Not answered	631



Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Table 6 – Gender identity

Gender Identity	Total
Different from birth	<5
Same as birth	1052
Prefer not to say	<5
Not answered	570

Table 7 – Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	Total
Bisexual	<5
Gay or Lesbian	8
Heterosexual	498
Other sexual orientation	<5
Prefer not to say	539
Not answered	579



Agenda Item 5

By virtue of paragraph(s) vii of Standing Order 17.42

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